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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN INTO THE HEAD START PROGRAM, SUMMER 1965--A CASE STUDY OF SIX CENTERS IN NEW YORK CITY. STUDY II.

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TO RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF WHY SOME PARENTS SENT ELIGIBLE CHILDREN TO HEAD START AND SOME DID NOT, A STUDY WAS MADE OF SIX HEAD START CENTERS IN NEW YORK CITY. THE STUDY SAMPLE WAS COMPOSED OF THE THREE CENTERS HAVING THE BEST RECRUITMENT RECORD AND THE THREE HAVING THE POOREST. EACH GROUP HAD ONE NEGRO, ONE PUERTO RICAN, AND ONE MIXED SCHOOL. MATCHED SETS OF 150 HEAD START AND 150 NON-HEAD START CHILDREN FROM THESE SCHOOLS WERE CHOSEN. THEIR PARENTS WERE INTERVIEWED BY INTERVIEWERS OF THE MATCHING ETHNIC GROUP. FINDINGS WERE THAT SOME ELIGIBLE FAMILIES HAD THE MEANS TO PROVIDE OTHER SUMMER PROGRAMS AS ALTERNATES AND SO DID NOT ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN. SOME LOW INCOME PARENTS HELD HIGH EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND ENROLLED THEM TO HELP REALIZE THEIR GOALS. INTERVIEWS BY INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL WERE FOUND TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN RECRUITING. ETHNIC BACKGROUND AFFECTED PARENTAL REASONS FOR ENROLLMENT. FOR INSTANCE, PUERTO RICAN MOTHERS WANTED THEIR CHILDREN TO BE EXPOSED TO SITUATIONS OUTSIDE THEIR OWN CULTURAL EXPERIENCE. THE MOST COMMON REASON FOR ENROLLMENT WAS THAT HEAD START WOULD HELP CHILDREN ADJUST SOCIALLY TO SCHOOL. SOME PARENTS GAVE EDUCATION, RECREATION, AND CHILD CARE AS REASONS FOR ENROLLMENT. THE MOST COMMON REASON FOR NOT ENROLLING CHILDREN WAS THE LACK OF ENROLLMENT INFORMATION. INTERVIEWS REVEALED ENTHUSIASM FOR HEAD START AND A NEED FOR MORE EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT. (SEE ALSO PS 000 281, PS 000 283, PS 000 284, PS 000 285, PS 000 286.) (LG)

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OEO PROJECT 141-61

STUDY II

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Factors Influencing the Recruitment of Children into the Head Start Program, Summer 1965

A Case Study of Six Centers in New York City

by

Max Wolff and Annie Stein

PS 000282

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Max Wolff
Annie Stein
Project II

FACTORS INFLUENCING RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN INTO THE HEAD START PROGRAM, SUMMER 1965

A Case Study of Six Centers in New York City

I. INTRODUCTION

Why did some parents send their children to Head Start and why did others not? There has been much speculation about possible differences in home environment, income and family structure between families of Head Start and of non-Head Start children. It has been suggested that Head Start picked off those children whose families care more about education and that the indifferent hard core of low-income families were the ones who did not respond. Another source of wide difference of opinion exists over which publicity methods reach low-income families and which do not.

This study was undertaken to help resolve these questions with the purpose of helping Head Start Centers improve their recruitment methods and to give information about the home environments to practitioners in the field of education for low-income children.

II. METHODOLOGY

The Project decided in preparing its design that whatever methods the Head Start Center had used, a valid judgement of the effectiveness of those methods would be the parents' own statement of how they had heard about the program and why they decidod to send their children. Similarly, those parents who did not send their children would be a significant source of information about ineffective methods.

For that reason a questionnaire for home interviews was devised (attached) which included questions related to the home environment, recruitment procedure and motivation together with other questions for use in Project I under investigation at the same time.

Sample: The head of the New York City Head Start program in the public schools, was asked to select the three Centers that had the best recruitment record and the three Centers that had the poorest recruitment record. The only other condition for choice was that one school in each group was to be all-Negro, one predominantly Puerto Rican and the third mixed in ethnic composition. The Head Start officials were thoughtfully cooperative and, after a thorough check with supervisory staff of the Centers, selected our six-Center sample.

The Project then (October, 1966) traced the children from these Centers into the public kindergarten classes to which they had been assigned and recorded needed data from the individual kindergarten record cards of the children. As the control, the Project recorded the identical data from the record cards of all the Head Start children's classmates.

In all, the data, including names, addresses, age, sex, number of siblings, and prior schooling for 860 children in seven public elementary school kindergartens were assembled. 310 had attended Head Start in the previously chosen Centers and the remaining 550 had not. This was the net sample after removal of those Head Start children who had had 19 or fewer days of Head Start and any of their classmates who had had pre-schooling elsewhere.

Of this group, 300 were chosen, 150 Head Start children (every other

Head Start name recorded), and an equal number of non-Head Start children matched by IBM card sort, as follows:

1. They attended the same school.
2. They had the same teachers, preferably in the same class.
3. They were of the same sex.
4. They were of the same age, either five to five years five months or five and one half to six years.
5. They were of the same race or ethnic background.
6. They had close to an equal number of siblings in the home.
7. The same language was spoken in their homes.

During the months of March through May, 1966, the families were interviewed by trained interviewers of the same ethnic or racial group as the respondents, in the language spoken most freely by the parents. Only the mother, father or official guardian was interviewed.

Because of losses through families having moved, the final tabulations based on completed interviews total 244 families of whom half are Head Start and half non-Head Start, matched as described above. An additional 23 interviews were completed, but their pairs were no longer available for interview. These have not been included in the tables below except where specifically noted on the table.

The 244 families interviewed have these characteristics:

	Head Start	non-Head Start	Total
Non-Puerto Rican Negroes	72	72	144
Puerto Ricans	44	44	88
non-Puerto Rican whites	6	6	12
	122	122	244

Of the Head Start parents, 69 are from good recruitment Head Start Centers and 53 are from poor recruitment Centers, with identical numbers of non-Head Start parents.

III. FINDINGS

A. Demographic

1. Do the families of Head Start children differ from those of their non-Head Start classmates in income level, Welfare status, size of family and number of parents at home?

There is a striking similarity between Head Start and non-Head Start children's families in the basic economic and social conditions in the home. (See Table 1.) It is understood, of course, since the Head Start children are matched with non-Head Start in the same kindergarten classes in the same schools, that they live in the same immediate neighborhood and that their housing conditions will be similar. Many of the pairs lived in the very same house or in the same housing project.

If there is any economic advantage either group has it lies with the non-Head Start families since they have a higher percentage in the $5-7,000 income group and a lower percentage in the $3-5,000 income group than Head Start families. They have the further economic advantage of

TABLE 1.
HOME ENVIRONMENT OF CHILDREN WHO ATTENDED HEAD START CENTERS AND OF THEIR KINDERGARTEN CLASSMATES WHO DID NOT
In Seven Public Elementary Schools in New York City

	122 Head Start parents	122 non-Head Start parents
Ethnic		
Non-Puerto Rican Negro	72	72
Puerto Rican	44	44
Non-Puerto Rican white	6	6
Children under 18 at home		
1 child	11	25
2 children	24	24
3 children	31	32
4 children	27	13
5 children	15	13
6 or more children	14	15
Mother working now	19	17
Parents at home		
Father and mother	87	85
Father only	0	2
Mother only	30	29
Guardian	2	2
Other (in shelters, etc.)	1	2
Unknown	2	2
Annual family income		
Under $3,000	16	16
$3,000 to $4,999	57	48
$5,000 to $6,999	27	38
$7,000 to $9,999	2	3
$10,000 and over	1	1
Unknown	19	16
Major income source		
Wages	83	86
Welfare, ADC	31	25
Pension	1	0
Other (support by ex-husband, family, etc.)	4	9
Unknown	3	2

having more one-child families (25 as against 11) than Head Start families, and fewer very large number of children. Fewer of the non-Head Start families are on Welfare. (20% for non-Head Start as against 25% for Head Start.)

However, these economic advantages are minimal. In the $5-7,000 income group most of the families hovered around the $5500-6,000 level so that they could not afford a qualitatively better standard of living than the majority of those in the $3-5,000 group who clustered close to $5,000.

2. If economically they are drawn from the same low-income group, do they differ substantially in the educational background of the parents or in their desire to see their children well-educated?

Here again the findings upset any presumption that parents with higher educational attainments are more likely to send their children to a pre-school program. (See Table 2.)

Table 3.omits those families for whom we had no response on this question (Unknowns in Table 2.) and shows the percentages for those who responded to the question on educational attainment.

From Table 3. it is clear that the non-Head Start fathers and mothers had the advantage in educational background. (An interesting finding is that mothers in both groups tended to be better educated than fathers.) Twenty-nine percent of the fathers of Head Start children were high school graduates or had had more education contrasted with 38 percent of the non-Head Start fathers. For mothers, the difference was slighter but in the same direction, 38 percent of Head Start mothers with

TABLE 2.

HIGHEST SCHOOL GRADE COMPLETED BY PARENTS OF HEAD START AND OF NON-HEAD START CHILDREN

	Father		Mother	
	H.S.	non-H.S.	H.S.	non-H.S.
Less than 5th grade	10	5	11	9
5th or 6th grade	8	9	8	12
7th or 8th grade	14	6	10	4
Some high school	26	28	35	32
High school graduation	20	25	36	38
Some college or post-high school	3	2	3	1
College graduation	0	3	1	1
Unknown	41	44	18	25

TABLE 3.

HIGHEST SCHOOL GRADE COMPLETED BY PARENTS OF HEAD START AND OF NON-HEAD START CHILDREN

Percentage Distribution of those Responding

	Father		Mother	
	H.S.	non-H.S.	H.S.	non-H.S.
8th grade or less	39%	26%	28%	26%
Some high school	32	36	34	33
High school graduation	25	32	35	39
Some college	4	2	2	1
College graduation	0	4	1	1
	100%	100%	100%	100%
(Number of responses)	(81)	(78)	(104)	(97)

high school graduation or more as against 41 percent of non-Head Start mothers.

What do we know about the motivation for education of Head Start parents as contrasted with non-Head Start parents? To probe the general value placed on education by the parents we interviewed, we asked the question given with the responses in Table 4.

These findings and the parents' comments recorded by interviewers indicate clearly that nearly all the parents of both Head Start and non-Head Start children have a powerful conviction that without a good education a child is doomed to economic disaster. A good education is defined by most respondents as "as much as he can possibly get--college or more if possible."

Some typical comments recorded by the interviewers were:

> "Those who can better graduate college. If no money, they can manage with high school."
> "High school certificate is no use nowadays."
> "I would like that they would study as much as possible, - at least, not to go to a factory."
> "If you go for work, they will choose the college graduate."

Not one parent considered that anything less than high school graduation would equip a child "to get along in the world today." Despite the general recognition that college is essential for all children, one Puerto Rican parent said "College for the rich, high school graduation for the poor." This same discouragement appeared many times. "He really needs college graduation, but I don't know if he can get there." In contrast many parents spoke of their determination to send their children to college despite economic obstacles. One parent, a Puerto Rican mother (non-Head Start) of six children, living on Welfare, reported that she had

TABLE 4.

Responses to the question:

"IN YOUR OPINION, HOW MUCH EDUCATION DOES A CHILD NEED TO GET ALONG IN THE WORLD TODAY?"

	Responses			
	Head Start parents		Non-Head Start parents	
Elementary school (through 8th grade)	0		0	
Some high school	0		0	
High school graduation	25		24	
Technical post-high	1		1	
Some college	17	92	20	86
College graduation	75		66	
Professional school	2		2	
Other	0		2	
Do not know	2		7	

opened a savings account in her kindergarten child's name with the $250 that she had collected after the child had been bitten by a rat. This was to go for his college education, she said.

Only six more Head Start than non-Head Start parents thought some college or college graduation was essential, indicating that there is no real difference in motivation between the two groups. It is interesting and informative too, to note that only nine of the 244 parents interviewed had no opinion on the question. The responses were prompt and emphatic and left no doubt in the interviewers' minds that the overwhelming majority of all the parents in these socio-economic groups interviewed have a strong desire for good education for their children and a realistic evaluation of what the educational requirements for good jobs will be for their children.*

None of the demographic findings of this Study establish differences between Head Start and non-Head Start parents significant enough to provide environment-centered explanations for their decision on whether or not to send their children to Head Start.

There are two other avenues left to explore to find the determining factors in good or poor recruitment into the program:

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*This finding, although it runs counter to the current belief that parents in low socio-economic ciucumstances lack educational motivation, is supported by other recent studies.
See: M. Deutsch, "Race and Social Class as Separate Factors Related to Social Environment," American Journal of Sociology Vol. LXX No. 4., Jan., 1965 University of Chicago.
R. Cloward and J.A. Jones, "Social Class: Educational Attitudes and Participation," H. Passow, Ed. Education in Depressed Areas, N.Y. Teachers College Bureau of Publications, 1963.

1) methods used to acquaint the parents with the program and 2) reasons given by the parents themselves for sending or not sending their children to Head Start.

However, before leaving the description of the children's home environment it will be informative to explore what demographic differences there may be between non-Puerto Rican Negro parents and Puerto Rican parents as a guide to understanding what recruiting methods are appropriate for each group.

3. Differences between Negro and Puerto Rican families.

The Negro households have characteristics very similar to the total sample. The non-Head Start children's families have the advantage over those of Head Start children in somewhat higher annual family income (mode of $5,000 to $6,999 for non-Head Start as against $3,000 to $4,999 for Head Start), more single-child families and fewer large (4 or more children) families; more with both parents in the home and fewer on Welfare. (See Table 5.)

The Puerto Rican non-Head Start families also show the same economic advantages in family size and annual family income, but there is a clear difference in one regard. A higher percentage of non-Head Start Puerto Rican families are on Welfare and have mother the only parent than Head Start Puerto Rican families, the opposite of the trend for Negroes. This finding bears out the interviewers' observations that the Puerto Rican mother living alone with her children on Welfare is very much more isolated than the Negro mother in the same predicament. The Negro mothers

TABLE 5.

HOME ENVIRONMENT OF NON-PUERTO RICAN NEGRO AND OF PUERTO RICAN KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN, BY WHETHER OR NOT THEY ATTENDED THE HEAD START PROGRAM

Comparative Percentage Distributions

	Non-PR Negro		Puerto Rican	
	H.S.	non-H.S.	H.S.	non-H.S.
Children under 18 at home				
1 child	12%	28%	5%	11%
2 or 3 children	39	39	52	50
4 or more children	49	33	43	39
Mother working now	17%	17%	16%	11%
Parents at home				
Father and mother	60%	67%	87%	73%
Father only or mother only	34	28	11	23
Guardian and other	3	3	2	4
Unknown	3	2	0	0
Annual family income				
Under $3,000	14%	8%	11%	21%
$3,000 to $4,999	38	31	66	57
$5,000 to $6,999	22	36	18	20
$7,000 to $9,999	3	3	0	2
$10,000 and over	0	0	0	0
Unknown	23	22	5	0
Major income source				
Wages	60%	67%	82%	73%
Welfare, ADC	30	21	18	23
Pension	0	0	0	0
Other (support by ex-husband, family, etc.)	6	10	0	4
Unknown	4	2	0	0
(Number interviewed)	(72)	(72)	(44)	(44)

were more apt to send their children to Head Start than the Puerto Rican mothers. This group of Puerto Rican mothers (included in the 23 percent non-Head Start Puerto Rican families on Welfare, Table 5.) had in most instances never heard of the Head Start program since many of them rarely leave home and live very isolated lives.

Comparing the Negro and Puerto Rican homes without regard to Head Start or non Head Start we find far fewer one-child families amongst the Puerto Ricans; a substantially higher proportion of two-parent households, reflecting the Puerto Rican tradition of closely-knit family life; and a generally lower income level (only 20 percent of the Puerto Rican families earned more than $5,000 contrasted with 32 percent of the Negro families). This income difference is not a qualitative one since all the groups studied are low-incomed. No more than 3 percent in either group earns more than $7,000 a year.

As in the sample as a whole, Negroes who had not elected Head Start for their children tended to have higher educational attainments than those who had. This was true for both fathers and mothers. A higher proportion of mothers than of fathers had high school diplomas for this ethnic group.

Similarly, Puerto Rican fathers in the non-Head Start group had more education than Head Start fathers. Non-Head Start Puerto Rican mothers' education did not differ much from that of Head Start Puerto Rican mothers.

There was a marked difference, however, in the education levels attained by Negroes and by Puerto Ricans for both sexes.

About 45 percent of the Negro fathers and over 50 percent of

the Negro mothers had achieved high school graduation or more, but only about 15 percent of the Puerto Rican fathers and 18 percent of the Puerto Rican mothers had had that much education. (See Tables 6.and 7.)

Finally, the answers to the question "How much education does a child need to get along in the world today?" show close similarity between Head Start and non-Head Start in each ethnic group.

However, the Negro parents in considerably larger numbers (over 80 percent) believe college is necessary as compared with about 55 percent of the Puerto Rican parents. Neither group thought anything less than high school graduation would suffice for a child today. (See Table 8.)

B. Methods used for recruiting children into Head Start

Methods of recruiting children varied widely from Center to Center in the summer of 1965 when all recruitment had to be done in a great hurry. Supervisors, directors and parent coordinators were interviewed by the Study staff before the design of this Project was made firm. Parent coordinators felt that the most effective method was home visiting by local, trusted people. Several Centers used unusual methods successfully, such as talking to mothers in supermarkets, at bus stops and in playgrounds. Others obtained the cooperation of other city agencies such as Welfare, Housing Authorities, health personnel, hospital and clinic personnel. Local leaders in churches and trade unions were appealed to to help reach the parents.

The home interviews conducted by this Study sought to determine quantitatively how effective these various methods were in actually

TABLE 6.

HIGHEST SCHOOL GRADE COMPLETED BY NEGRO AND BY PUERTO RICAN PARENTS INTERVIEWED

Comparative Percentage Distributions

	Negro	
	Father	Mother
8th grade or less	19%	11%
Some high school	36	34
High school graduation	41	52
Some college	3	1
College graduation	1	2
(Number of responses)	(83)	(114)

	Puerto Rican	
	Father	Mother
8th grade or less	55%	53%
Some high school	30	29
High school graduation	11	17
Some college	3	1
College graduation	1	0
(Number of responses)	(66)	(77)

TABLE 7.

HIGHEST SCHOOL GRADE COMPLETED BY NEGRO PARENTS AND BY PUERTO RICAN PARENTS BY HEAD START AND NON-HEAD START FOR EACH
Comparative Percentage Distributions

	Negro			
	Father		Mother	
	H.S.	non-H.S.	H.S.	non-H.S.
8th grade or less	22%	17%	14%	9%
Some high school	39	33	36	33
High school graduation	37	45	49	54
Some college	2	3	0	2
College graduation	0	2	1	2
(Number of responses)	(41)	(42)	(59)	(55)

	Puerto Rican			
		non-		non-
	H.S.	H.S.	H.S.	H.S.
8th grade or less	66%	42%	54%	53%
Some high school	23	39	28	29
High school graduation	9	13	15	18
Some college	2	3	3	0
College graduation	0	3	0	0
(Number of responses)	(35)	(31)	(39)	(38)

TABLE 8.

Responses to the question:

"IN YOUR OPINION, HOW MUCH EDUCATION DOES A CHILD NEED TO GET ALONG IN THE WORLD TODAY?"
Percent of Each Group

	Negro	
	H.S.	non-H.S.
Elementary or some high school	0%	0%
High school graduation	14	15
Some college or college graduation	85	81
More	0	0
No opinion	1	4
(Number of responses)	(72)	(72)

	Puerto Rican	
	H.S.	non-H.S.
Elementary or some high school	0%	0%
High school graduation	34	30
Some college or college graduation	59	52
More	5	9
No opinion	2	9
(Number of responses)	(44)	(44)

persuading parents to enroll their children.

We asked two different types of questions: one was aimed at finding out whether any one person was directly responsible for the particular parent's decision to enroll her child and the second, to find out in what other ways the parent had been reached, even if the method had not been the one that finally resulted in the recruitment.

The tabulation of our interviews on the question: "Was there any <u>one</u> person who decided you to register your child in Head Start?" showed that 37 percent (45 out of 122) of the parents were directly influenced by an individual, the remainder having taken the initiative themselves to go to school to enroll their children.

Of the 45 parents who were directly influenced, 32 were reached by Head Start personnel or school personnel directly, 13 by friends or community organization leaders. Twelve met the person who influenced them at the school, 18 received home visits, and one met the Head Start recruiter in the street.

The 32 parents who were directly influenced by school or Head Start personnel identified the race or ethnic background of the official person who convinced them. Ten were Negroes, 15 were Puerto Ricans and seven were non-Puerto Rican whites, only one of whom spoke Spanish. Seventeen of the people who reached them were local people from the neighborhood.

The majority of the parents, (63 percent) registered their children for Head Start on their own initiative once they had heard about the program. This finding is indicative of the great groundswell of support given Head Start by the parents in these areas and reflects our

earlier finding of strong desire for education for their children.

The interviewers asked all the Head Start parents to report whether they had heard of the Head Start program through the press, radio or TV; through a letter or leaflet brought home from school; through posters; or through an official home visitor.

Thirty-eight of the 122 Head Start parents had not seen or heard any public announcement of the program through the regular media and 12 could not remember. Of the remaining 72, 31 had heard about it on TV, radio or through the newspapers, about evenly divided, with radio most prominent. Twenty-seven had seen posters in store windows, laundry rooms and, most frequently, on the regular housing-project bulletin boards. Fourteen had heard about it in a variety of other ways not tabulated.

Another frequent source of information was the letter or leaflet brought home from school by the older school-children. Sixty-four parents of the 122 remembered having received such a notice.

Thirty-nine parents reported that they had received home visits, of which 23 were by local people from the Head Start program, either family assistants or parent coordinators. As reported earlier, 18 parents attributed their decision to enroll their children directly to these visitors. The conclusion is reasonably well-established that the most effective door-to-door recruitment was done by local people.

Some of the other ways parents were recruited to the program were novel and interesting and worth trying where other methods have failed. These include:

Sound trucks
Letters sent out by the rent office of the low-income projects

Notices accompanying Welfare checks
Visiting nurses and posters in clinics
Notices in places of employment

C. Why did some parents enroll their children in Head Start and why did some not?

We have found that there is no essential difference in the home environment of the Head Start and non-Head Start children with some economic and social advantages appearing in favor of those families that did not enroll their children. To explore the reasons for the decision made, we asked the Head Start parents the direct question: "Why did you decide to send your child to Head Start last summer?"

The answers fell into several clear-cut groups and the count in each of the groups appears in Table 9. Each parent was asked to select two main reasons for sending his child. Since not all the parents offered more than one principal reason, the tally in Table 9. shows 183 responses for the 122 Head Start parents interviewed.

The great majority (62 percent) of the parents who sent their children to Head Start viewed the program as an opportunity for the children to become accustomed to the new environment of school before they entered the formal kindergarten. This function of social adjustment to kindergarten Head Start did accomplish as shown in the findings of Project I.

An additional 23 percent of the parents sought specific educational gains for their children, such as "to learn English," and "to learn

TABLE 9.

PRINCIPAL REASONS GIVEN BY PARENTS OF HEAD START CHILDREN FOR THEIR DECISION TO ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN

	Responses		
	Number		Percent
A. To be better prepared for kindergarten	113		62%
By getting used to being with other children and away from home		52	
By getting used to the teacher and school routine		22	
Better prepared, unspecified		39	
B. For educational advancement	42		23%
To learn English		5	
To learn school work		34	
To broaden his experience		3	
C. For recreational reasons	22		12%
Child wanted to go		6	
Safe play, off the streets		11	
Constructive summer play program		5	
D. Home-centered reasons	6		3%
No time to provide recreation for child		2	
Health and other care provided		0	
To make things easier at home		4	
All reasons	183	183	100%

school work." In this, other researchers* have found significant educational gains were made from June to September during the Head Start program's two-month span. Project I, testing the children six to eight months after Head Start, found no measurable differences in achievement between Head Start children and their kindergarten classmates who did not have Head Start.

Twelve percent thought of the summer Head Start program as a good recreational program that would keep the children safely and constructively occupied and happy. In this, most of the parents reported that Head Start was a great success. The children had a very good time and looked forward eagerly to entering kindergarten in the Fall. A companion finding that bears this out is that the attendance at the Centers studied was extraordinarily constant throughout the eight weeks.

Only three percent of the parents enrolled their children for home-centered reasons rather than child-centered reasons. Although the question may arise as to the unwillingness of people to appear "self-centered" in responding to questions by an interviewer, it is reasonable to assume that the answers were honest because, for most parents, Head Start was rather an onerous chore, not a relief. The children had to be awakened and dressed early, taken to and from school daily, and the short duration of the daily program did not give the parent much leisure for

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*Leon Eisenberg, M.D. and C. Keith Conners, Ph. D., "The Effect of Headstart on Developmental Processes." Report prepared for the Office of Economic Opportunity, April, 1966.

other things.

D. Why did some parents decide not to send their children to Head Start?

Nearly 60 percent of the non-Head Start parents interviewed had not sent their children to Head Start simply because they had never heard of it, or had heard too late to register their children. Nearly 90 percent of those who heard about it too late said they would have sent their children if they had heard about it in time.

If we add to this number those parents who did not send their children because of serious illness in the home, or because they had taken their children with them on vacation or had registered them at camps or in other summer programs, we find that 80 percent (100 out of 122) kept their children out of Head Start for reasons having nothing to do with their opinion of Head Start as a program for pre-schoolers. The "vacation" reason reflects the fact that non-Head Start families have a slightly higher income level than those who elected Head Start and are better able to provide alternative summer programs for their children.

Another group of reasons, also of a technical nature that could be overcome by a good Head Start program, involved the difficulties the parents had in getting their children to the schools, either because the mother was working and had no one to bring the child to school or because there were young babies at home whom the mother could not leave. In these cases (7) Head Start could arrange, as some Centers did, to have the children picked up at home and brought to and from school by aides.

Only 15 parents (12 percent of those interviewed) were opposed to

the program, considering it a waste of tim because it duplicated the kindergarten program or because they thought five-year olds are too young to be away from home. (See Table 10.)

E. Comparisons of reasons given by Negro and by Puerto Rican parents

The Study found that there is no real difference in educational motivation between Negro and Puerto Rican parents. A somewhat higher percentage of Puerto Rican parents than of Negroes (66 percent as against 60 percent) sought "better preparation for kindergarten," reflecting the tendency for Puerto Rican children to be kept closer to their mothers in early years, with less opportunity to play with their peers than Negro children. The Puerto Rican mother more frequently than the Negro mother expressed the idea to the interviewer that she sent her child to Head Start to "help him get used to being away from me." (See Table 11.)

The reasons given by parents who did not send their children to Head Start are, for both Negro and Puerto Rican parents, primarily reasons of either technical failure by the Centers to inform them of the program in time or, for about a fifth of the parents, the fact that the families could afford alternative summer programs for their children. (See Table 12.) It is especially interesting to note that only five percent of the Negro parents expressed any opposition to the program itself, although 20 percent of the Puerto Rican parents' responses were of this nature.

Here again the custom in Puerto Rican families of keeping the young children very close to home has influenced their decision not to enroll the five-year old in Head Start. Similarly, a glance back at the Head

TABLE 10.

PRINCIPAL REASONS GIVEN BY PARENTS FOR NOT ENROLLING THEIR CHILDREN IN HEAD START

	Responses		
	Number		Percent
A. Reasons related to the recruitment program	72		58%
Never heard of Head Start		49	
Heard too late to register child		22	
No room left in Center		1	
B. Difficulties that should have been overcome by the Center	7		6%
Too few hours-mother working		4	
Babies at home		3	
C. Other reasons, unrelated to opinion of Head Start program	28		22%
Child attending another program		4	
Vacation with family		19	
Illness of child or parents		5	
D. Opinion reasons	15		12%
Head Start a waste of time		6	
Child too young-should be with mother		5	
Child should play outdoors in summertime		4	
E. No opinion	3	3	2%
All reasons	125	125	100%

TABLE 11.

REASONS FOR HEAD START ENROLLMENT
BY NEGRO AND BY PUERTO RICAN PARENTS
Percent of All Reasons Given by Each Group.

	Negro parents	Puerto Rican parents
To be better prepared for kindergarten	60%	66%
For educational advancement	24	25
For recreational reasons	14	6
For home-centered reasons	2	3
	100%	100%
(Number of reasons)	(104)	(67)

TABLE 12.

REASONS GIVEN FOR NOT ENROLLING CHILDREN IN HEAD START,
BY NEGRO AND PUERTO RICAN PARENTS INTERVIEWED
Percent of All Reasons Given by Each Group

	Negro parents	Puerto Rican parents
A. Reasons related to the recruitment program	67%	47%
Never heard of Head Start	54%	22%
Heard too late to register	13	25
B. Difficulties that could have been overcome by Head Start	3%	13%
C. Other reasons, including vacations and illness	21%	20%
D. Opinion reasons	5%	20%
E. Could not decide	4%	0%
	100%	100%
(Number of responses)	(72)	(45)

Start parents' responses (Table 11.) shows that fewer Puerto Rican parents than Negro parents enrolled their children simply for recreational reasons. Only the over-riding recognition of the need for good education for their children seems to have motivated so many Puerto Rican parents to overcome their traditional practise.

F. Good and poor recruitment Centers

The Study included children from three Centers chosen for good recruitment and three others chosen for poor recruitment. An analysis of the reasons given by parents for sending or refusing to send their children to each of these Centers reveals no significant differences. About the same proportion of the parents of eligible children had been reached; the same methods hav been employed with the exception only of the use of posters. The home environments of the children in the good recruitment areas and in the poor recruitment areas are almost identical, the differences between Head Start and non-Head Start in every case being more significant.than between Centers.

An explanation for the slow progress in recruitment in the "poor" schools cannot be obtained from the home interviews conducted. Personal interviews with parent coordinators indicate other types of reasons that entered into the lack of success. In one case, the Head Start Center under study was competing with two other Centers very close by, one run by a church, the other by a neighborhood Center. In the second case, the coordinator reported that the public school principal was not well-liked in the community and his reputation carried over to the Center conducted

at his school although he was not part of the Head Start program. The reason in the third Center is not known.

IV. PARENTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTER RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES

All parents interviewed were asked, "In your opinion, what is the best way to bring more children into Head Start next summer?" In the order of the most frequently mentioned methods, both Head Start and non-Head Start parents suggested:

Home visiting by local people explaining the program	60 parents
More TV, radio and newspaper time	38 parents
Leaflets and letters to parents distributed under doors	41 parents
Posters in laundries, stores, bus stops, doctors' offices, hospital clinics, health stations	10 parents
Improvements in program, including pick-up service, early notification, a longer school day and baby-sitters	10 parents
Organization and housing-project meetings	8 parents
Displays showing a typical day in a Head Start Center	2 parents

V. CONCLUSIONS

The most important finding of this recruitment study is that it mattered little which methods were used to recruit children as long as word got out. The great majority of the parents (63 percent) once they heard of the program, came eagerly and of their own accord to register their children. The program responded to a deeply-felt need of the families in low-income areas to provide their children with greater educational opportunities.

The recruitment responsibility of Head Start that was not filled,

even in Centers noted for good recruitment, was the obligation to get each family with eligible children to know about the program in time for registration. Nearly 60 percent of those who did not send their children to Head Start had either not heard of it or had heard too late for admission to the program.

The single most effective way of informing parents was found to be by direct home visiting by local people associated with the program, particularly if they were of the same racial or ethnic background as the family visited.

A striking finding of the home interviews is the determination that the home environments of Head Start children and of non-Head Start children do not differ in any substantive way. Non-Head Start children's families are somewhat more advantaged in income level, smaller family size and higher educational attainments of the parents.

The desire for good education for their children is very great and the goal of college education highly motivates both groups of parents.

If the Head Start Center makes sure that every parent has heard of the program and if the warmth and spirit of last summer's welcoming attitude towards parents and children is maintained, the Center is assured of a surge of response from the parents.